

News Release

UMC Accreditation Process Successful. Evaluators Cite Exemplary Student Experience, Community Engagement as Hallmarks

By Krista Lemos on Wednesday, April 26, 2006

CROOKSTON, MN (April 26 , 2006) – The evaluation process at the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) was a success this week, ending with a recommendation for continued full accreditation. Peer evaluators from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools presented their recommendations on April 26 after a two-day visit to the campus and community.

The HLC team of five members, chaired by Benjamin F. Young, Ph.D., of Indiana University East, determined that UMC meets the criteria required by the commission to achieve continued full accreditation status for the maximum amount of time awarded, 10 years. No follow up is required. The team will recommend that the next comprehensive visit be held in 2016-17. Along with the accreditation, the team also will recommend approval for UMC to provide any of its traditionally offered degree programs online, as approved by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. UMC is the only campus in the University system to have this option.

"Today there is continued reason to celebrate and move ahead with confidence here at the University of Minnesota, Crookston," said UMC Chancellor Charles H. Casey. "This has been a tremendous campus and community effort, and we are extremely pleased with the external validation that the University provides exceptional education experiences and opportunities for discovery and engagement. "Clearly, our campus and community made a great lasting impression."

In sharing their oral findings, the HLC team said UMC's case for accreditation was comprehensive and presented passionately and persuasively. The members shared many compliments regarding the professional and committed campus team – students, faculty and staff. They also noted the strong and consistent support UMC receives from partners in the community, region and throughout the state – educational institutes, businesses, community organizations and the University of Minnesota administration.

The team found evidence to support all criteria as required by the HLC and documented in UMC's Self-Study Report that was submitted in February 2006. UMC was evaluated on HLC standards in the following five areas: mission and integrity; preparing for the future; student learning and effective teaching; acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge; and engagement and service. The HLC team found sufficient evidence that all required core components were met, thanks to the dedication and commitment of all involved in this process.

This is the final stage in this accreditation evaluation process that included peer review and a site visit. Over the last year, UMC conducted a campus-wide and community effort to prepare a self evaluation report documenting how we assess and advance quality instruction that is future oriented and supports students in achieving their educational goals. The report also demonstrates our ability to use resources efficiently and effectively.

During the on-site visit, the HLC team also recognized what they called "exemplary" UMC programs and services, as outlined below:

1. service learning and engagement – the quality of partnerships and engagement is phenomenal and there is plenty of evidence that the community finds value in what UMC is doing.

2. student award accomplishments – UMC students represent the community and region well in competitions regionally and nationally.

3. the student support service and achievement center is a campus "gem" and means by which faculty and staff work to bring all of the learning components together.

4. technology – the laptop for every student initiative, the comprehensive website content, and online degree programs all attest to UMC's strength in innovation and technology

The HLC team now will prepare a draft report and submit the report to Chancellor Casey in early June. UMC will have about a week to review the content for errors of fact. The HLC team will prepare the final report and submit it in late June to an internal HLC committee for review and recommendation. The final report is scheduled to go before the HCL board for consideration sometime in October.

Institutional accreditation is a comprehensive review by a private, nongovernmental organization specifically created to review higher education institutions and programs for quality. The four University of Minnesota campuses are accredited separately at the institutional level by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. UMC's last comprehensive visit was in 1995 and a focused visit on assessment was conducted in 2000. UMC provided a monitoring report on assessment in 2001 and a progress report on assessment in 2003. HLC accepted these reports.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) is a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution, celebrating 100 years of excellence in education, research and outreach. To learn more, visitwww.UMCrookston.edu.

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